

**United States Environmental Protection Agency
Criminal Investigation Division
Investigative Activity Report**

Case Number

1000-0487

Case Title:

Pacific Steel and Recycling

Reporting Office:

Seattle, WA, Area Office

Subject of Report:

20150819 Interview of (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), Assistant Chief of Spokane Fire Department

Activity Date:

August 19, 2015

Reporting Official and Date:

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

Special Agent

Approving Official and Date:

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

Assistant Special Agent in Charge

Assistant Special Agent in Charge

28-AUG-2015, Signed by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

31-AUG-2015, Approved by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

SYNOPSIS

On August 19, 2015, SA Stratton interviewed (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), Assistant Fire Chief for the City of Spokane Fire, regarding the chlorine gas release at the Pacific Steel and Recycling facility which occurred on August 12, 2015, in Spokane, Washington.

DETAILS

On August 19, 2015, I interviewed (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), Assistant Fire Chief for the City of Spokane Fire, regarding the chlorine gas release at the Pacific Steel and Recycling facility which occurred on August 12, 2015, in Spokane, Washington. After being notified of the nature of the interview and the identity of the interviewing agent, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), in substance, provided the following information:

He was the Incident Commander for the Spokane Fire Department's response to the chlorine gas release from the Pacific Steel and Recycling (PSR) facility in Spokane, Washington on August 12, 2105.

The initial call was for a "40-I", which is a single fire company response to an investigation of an unknown issue at the PSR facility. When the fire company arrived on scene they found between five and six victims, who were ambulatory, but in distress. The fire lieutenant on scene called for a full HAZMAT response. Two battalion chiefs and he arrived on scene soon after.

By the time the first fire company arrived on scene, the cloud of the unknown gas has dissipated enough that it could no longer be seen by the responders. At first the fire company believed they were dealing with a version of ammonia. The on scene firefighters responded with fire turnout gear and SCBA's and assisted the PSR employees.

He requested assistance from a HAZMAT response team from Sandpoint, Idaho and a HAZMAT team from Fairchild Air Force Base. The teams came in and entered the scene with level "A" HAZMAT suits. They completed a full decontamination of the patients and transported thirteen of the patients to nearby Spokane hospitals. During the decontamination process, the clothes of the victims were tested by a hand held monitor in order to determine the type of chemical that was involved. A spectrum analysis was completed through the use of this machine and it was determined that the chemical was chlorine gas.

Shortly after the scene was secured, he was informed of a second set of potential victims were found at the City of Spokane "Nelson" building. At the same time of the chemical release, the City

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of Spokane was holding an opening celebration of the new building and several people attending complained of symptoms similar to victims at the PSR facility. Several other businesses in the area were affected by the release. He knows that several hospitals had “walk in” victims of the chemical release, in addition to the patients his department transported to local hospitals.

The HAZMAT cleanup at several of the buildings was completed by the Fairchild Air Force Base personnel and once inside some of the buildings adjacent to the Nelson building they found multiples of dead bugs. This indicated that the buildings were at one point inundated with the chlorine gas.

After the scene was cleared of personnel, he turned the contaminated scene over to Clean Harbors, a contractor hired by PSR, for the cleanup. The lead HAZMAT person for the Fairchild Air Force unit was (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) with a contact phone number of (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

His department will provide a detailed case report of the incident and provide it to EPA CID for inclusion into their case investigation.

*At the end of the interview, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) gave me a copy of an Excel spreadsheet containing the names of the thirteen people transported to local Spokane hospitals.

ATTACHMENT

20150820 (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) Medical List.pdf